

Report on Bofors Case

3450. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up a Committee to vet the Special Investigation Team (SIT)'s report on Bofors case,

(b) if so, the composition thereof; and

(c) the time limit fixed for completion of vetting of the report by the SPI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) to (c) The Government is not required to vet the Investigation report of the CBI. Any recommendation made by the CBI which requires consideration by the Government as per the provisions of law is submitted to the Government. In the Bofors Case, the CBI has submitted a report with its recommendations to the Government. Further action will be as per the provisions of law. A committee of senior officers has been directed to monitor the expeditious processing of the case as also to provide inter ministerial coordination.

Corruption Cases

3451. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases of corruption, dishonesty and assets disproportionate to the income of civil servants investigated by the Vigilance Department of Ministry in 1995-96.

(b) the number of officers, grade-wise, involved in the above cases;

(c) the number of complaints of corruption and dishonesty received during 1995-96 and the action taken thereon;

(d) whether the Vigilance Department initiate action suo moto against the staff suspected to be dishonest and corrupt;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Ministry have made any review of the functioning of powers of Vigilance Section under their control; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU) : (a) Cases of corruption and assets disproportionate to the income of Civil Servants are investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation. Vigilance Unit of this Ministry does not investigate such

cases. 34 cases of dishonesty involving 55 officers were investigated by the Vigilance Unit of the Ministry in 1995-96.

(b) Grade-wise details of officers involved in the above cases are as under :

Group - A	:	30
Group - B	:	14
Group - C	:	10
Group - D	:	01

(c) During the year 1995-96, 46 complaints alleging corruption and dishonesty were received in the Vigilance Unit of the Ministry. Out of these, 12 complaints were closed after investigation; 2 complaints were referred to the CBI; 10 complaints are at various stages of investigation, 3 complaints were referred to the Central Vigilance Commission for their advice; minor penalty proceedings were initiated in 5 complaints; major penalty proceedings were initiated in 6 complaints; warnings were issued in 4 complaints and Attached/Subordinate Offices were directed to initiate regular Departmental action for major/minor penalty in 4 complaints.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) No, Sir.

(g) Does not arise.

Trade with Central Asian Republics

3452. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether India, Iran and Turkmenistan have signed a key transit agreements to propel trade with resource-rich Central Asian Republics;

(b) if so, the main points of the agreement; and

(c) the extent to which the transit agreement has helped in improving the trade relations with the Central Asian countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir. India, Iran and Turkmenistan signed a Trilateral Agreement on International Transit of Goods at the level of Foreign Ministers on 22 February, 1997 in Tehran.

(b) A suo moto statement was made by the External Affairs Minister before the Lok Sabha on 26 February, 1997, a copy of which is enclosed as Statement.

(c) The Trilateral Agreement on International Transit of Goods provides various facilities for Indian traders who use the Iranian transit route for trade with Turkmenistan and other Central Asian Republics. Indian Businessmen have been increasingly using the route.

Statement

*Copy of the Suo Moto Statement by
the External Affairs Minister,
Shri I.K. Gujral,
before the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha
on the Agreement on
International Transit of Goods
between the Republic of India,
The Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan.*

26th February, 1997

I have the pleasure to inform the Hon'ble Members of this August House that on February 22, 1997 in Tehran, India, Iran and Turkmenistan signed at the level of Foreign Ministers an agreement on the international transit of goods between India, Iran and Turkmenistan. This has brought to fruition the process begun in April, 1995 when the three countries signed a trilateral MOU on this subject. The three sides have worked together in a spirit of friendship, mutual understanding and constructive cooperation in finalising this agreement. Its signing reflects the traditionally close relations India has with Iran and Turkmenistan. It is also in keeping with the vision of the Governments of these countries to promote economic cooperation amongst themselves and with other CIS countries which accede to it in future.

The cardinal objective of the agreement is to provide a suitable juridical and legal framework for the multi-modal movement of goods from India to Iran and Turkmenistan, and other countries that join the arrangement in the future, and vice-versa. The salient features of the agreement are :

- It facilitates, simplifies and accelerates customs and other formalities including minimising documentation and inspection requirements for the transit of goods. For example, it provides that the goods transiting under this agreement will not be subject to examination through the customs jurisdiction en route except when irregularities are suspected.
- It provides for the exemption of import and export duties or other taxes for goods in transit. Only charges for specific services can be levied as stipulated by internal legislation and as applicable to all other countries.
- The signatories have agreed to examine the possibility of setting up a simplified visa regime for personnel engaged in the transit of cargo under this agreement.
- There will be a regular joint mechanism for supervising the implementation of the agreement, for recommending changes to it and to consider any other related matter.

The agreement meets the need for developing an efficient, reliable, dependable and cost-effective route

for trade and other forms of economic interaction between India, Iran and Turkmenistan and our other economic partners in the CIS region. My counterparts from Turkmenistan and Iran have joined me in underlining the importance of expanding and developing cooperative endeavours between our three countries in the field of trade and industry. I believe that the trilateral agreement on the transit of goods will be a key element in meeting this objective.

I am also happy to inform the Hon'ble Members that the President of Turkmenistan, His Excellency, Mr. Saparmurad A. Niyazov is currently paying a goodwill State visit to India. Discussions clearly brought out the identity of views on both sides on important bilateral, regional and international issues. The two sides have warmly welcomed the signing of the trilateral agreement on the transit of goods between India, Iran and Turkmenistan. They agreed that this landmark agreement would further enhance trade and other forms of economic cooperation amongst these three countries, and CIS countries which accede to it in the future. The agreement will foster a harmonious climate for multilayered economic cooperation and strengthen the cause of peace, stability and development in the region.

In conclusion, I would like to place on record our appreciation of the cooperation extended by the Governments of Iran and Turkmenistan in reaching this agreement and of the constructive spirit in which the officials of the different Ministries and Departments of the three countries have worked together in this regard.

Indian Business Laws

3453. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Council of Arbitration urges to harmonise Indian Business Laws" appearing in the Indian Express dated July 12, 1997;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government to the memorandum received by the Government from various organisations in this regard;

(c) the details of action taken thereon; and

(d) the details of fresh initiatives/steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) The Government have seen the news report. Indian Council of Arbitration has not approached or urged the Ministry of External Affairs to harmonise the Indian Business Laws.

(b) Sir, No Memorandums have been received from any organisations in this regard.

(c) Does not arise.